



STEERING COMMITTEE

Joseph Bonelli
University of Connecticut

Bonnie Burr
University of Connecticut

Cris Coffin
Land for Good

Jeff Cordulack
CT NOFA

Gordon Gibson
Connecticut State Grange

John Guskowski
CME Associates

Eric Hammerling
CT Forest & Park Association

Lisa Holmes
CitySeed

Terry Jones
Jones Family Farms

Kip Kolesinskas
Manchester

Henry Lord
New Haven

Elisabeth Moore
Connecticut Farmland Trust

Lucy Nolan
End Hunger CT!

Amy Paterson
CT Land Conservation Council

Richard Roberts
Halloran & Sage

Jesse Robertson-DuBois
American Farmland Trust

Jim Smith
Cushman Farm

Melissa Spear
Common Ground

Keith Stechshulte
Farm Credit East

Kevin Sullivan
Chestnut Hill Nursery

Henry Talmage
CT Farm Bureau Association

Testimony on HB 7027

AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR

Appropriations Committee

Submitted by: Terry Jones

Working Lands Alliance Steering Committee

February 17, 2017

Senators Formica and Osten, Representatives Walker and Ziobron, and other distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Terry Jones and I serve as chairman of the Steering Committee for the Working Lands Alliance (WLA), a broad-based, statewide coalition dedicated to preserving Connecticut's farmland. WLA includes such organizations as American Farmland Trust, the CT State Grange, CT Nursery and Landscape Association, End Hunger CT!, and the CT Farm Bureau, among many others. As an Alliance, our primary focus is on protecting Connecticut's farmland and on ensuring that Connecticut agriculture remains strong.

Thank you for providing this opportunity to offer testimony on HB 7027. I join with my fellow steering committee member, Melissa Spear, in emphasizing the importance of adequately funding the Department of Agriculture. In addition to pointing out how sufficient funding is crucial in the Department of Agriculture's ability to carry out its mission, I wanted to also advocate for the CT Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) – another small agency that is critical to not only the success of the CT farmer, but also in helping to protect the health of CT residents.

The mission of the CAES is a broad one and covers a number of important areas – agriculture, environment, food safety, and public health. The CAES is engaged in research that's important to CT agriculture – research which includes topics such as pollinator health as well as insects and diseases threatening our food crops. Additionally, scientists at the Ag Experiment Station oversee nursery inspections, a very important responsibility since our green industry is the leading sector of the agricultural economy in CT. The CAES also serves our agricultural producers by providing them with the best science available to address constantly changing threats and issues impacting CT's agricultural community.

As frequent recipients of outside grants, the talented scientists working at the CAES routinely leverage state dollars to carry out their important work. Their research and collaboration with Yale, Quinnipiac and other area colleges – as well as their outreach efforts to the business community and notable schools like New Haven’s Sound School and Common Ground High School – should be viewed as a worthy investment.

On behalf of the Working Lands Alliance, I thank the Committee for allowing us to share our thoughts. We urge this Committee to consider the detrimental impact further cuts to both the CT Department of Agriculture as well as the CAES would have on our growing agricultural economy. The task before you is an arduous one and we wish you the very best as you work tirelessly to create a budget that provides the necessary services to keep CT a desirable place to live, work, and raise a family.